Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /056 W
----------110354Z 021345 /15
R 101027Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY ACCRA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8492

C O N F I D E N T I A L ACCRA 4416

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PGOV, GH
SUBJ: GHANA GOVERNMENT FORMS POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE NET

1. IN A "CONFIDENTIAL" ADDRESS MAY 30 TO A SEMINAR OF REGIONAL AND DISTRICT INFORMATION OFFICERS, COMMISSIONER FOR INFORMATION COL. PARKER YARNEY DIRECTED THAT AN "OPERATIONS/ANSWER UNIT" BE SET UP IN THE MINISTRY, WITH ITS HEADQUARTERS IN ACCRA AND OUTLYING OFFICES IN COUNTRY'S NINE REGIONAL CAPITALS. UNIT WOULD FUNCTION AS POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE NET, OPERATING ON 24 HOURS BASIS AND RECEIVING INFORMATION FROM INFORMATION OFFICERS VIA SHORTWAVE RADIOS, TELEPHONES AND POLICE VHF SYSTEM, DAILY SITREPS WERE TO BE PREPARED COVERING A NUMBER OF POINTS: CHIEFTAINCY AFFAIRS, SMC/NRC MATTERS, AGITATION FOR RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE, UNTION GOVERNMENT, OPERATION FEED YOUR-SELF, HOARDING AND SMUGGLING, SHORTAGES OF COMMODITIES AND ACTIVITIES OF PRESSURE GROUPS (YOUTHS, MARKET WOMEN, TRADE UNIONS, ETC.).

2. YARNEY SAID UNIT WAS BEING ESTABLISHED BECAUSE "HAVING FAILED TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL THROUGH VILOENT MEANS, THE ENEMIES OF THE 13TH JANUARY REVOLUTION HAVE
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NOW RESORTED TO CHARACTER ASSASSINATION, MUDSLINGINS AND SLANDER THROUGH MISINFORMATION TO UNDERMINE THE AUTHORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT. HE ORDERED THAT "SUCH UNPATRIOTIC ACTS MUST BE STOPPED WITHOUT DELAY" AND GAVE INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW VARIOUS TYPES OF RUMORS WERE TO BE COUNTERED. ("ORDINARY" RUMORS WERE TO BE CORRECTED BY INFORMATION OFFICERS ON THE SPOT.

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"MALICIOUS" RUMORS--FABRICATED FOR POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES BY GHANAIANS OR OUTSIDE AGENTS--WERE TO BE REPORTED BY COURIER TO ACCRA. ONLY "MATTERS REQUIRING IMMEDIATE ATTENTION OF GOVERNMENT"WOULD BE REPORTED BY RADIO.) YARNEY CLOSED BY CALLING FOR RENEWED EFFORTS BY MINISTRY OFFICERS AND REMINDED THEM THAT "A NONCHALANT PERSONALITY CANNOT BE A GOOD INFORMATION OFFICER."

3. COMMENT: THIS IS FIRST WE HAVE HEARD OF "OPERATIONS/ANSWER UNIIT" AND WE CANNOT CONFIRM THAT IT HAS ACTUALLY BEEN SET UP. IF IT HAS, WE DOUBT IT WILL BE VERY EFFECTIVE GIVEN DIFFICULTIES OF COMMUNICATION HERE AND WIDESPREAD OPPOSITION TO REGIME. NEVERTHELESS, YARNEY'S DIRECTIVES ARE A FURTHER SIGN OF UNCERTAINTY AND MISTRUST IN TOP LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT. SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS TO REPORT AGITATION FOR RETURN TO CIVILIAN RULE IS, TO OUR KNOWLEDGE, FIRST TIME THIS TOPIC HAS BEEN MENTIONED IN AN OFFICIAL GOG STATEMENT.
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